

Souk Talents

**Empowering the Next Generation
of Film Professionals**

From December 6 till December 10, 2025
Red Sea International Film Festival – Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Workshops · Mentorship · Masterclasses · Networking · Growth

Step in, connect, and shape your cinematic journey.

FOR THE

LOVE OF CINEMA

2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Souk Talents	4
Souk Talents Schedule	5
Souk Talents Open Talks	6
THE GEMS	10
Film Critic Gems – Reflection & Discourse	11
Short Film Gems :	12
THE PITCH BUZZ Short Film Script Development & Pitching	12
Raw Cut – Work in Progress Short Film	13
Industry Gems	14
Industry Gems Mentorship & Career Development	14
Filmmaker Gems	15
Filmmakers Spotlight	15
Partners & Contacts	16
Souk Talents Team	17

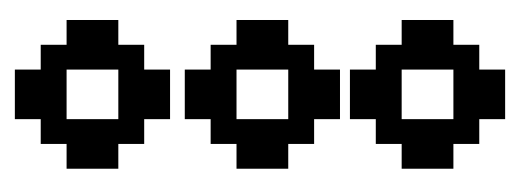
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About Souk Talents



Souk Talents is the Red Sea International Film Festival's flagship platform supporting emerging film professionals in Saudi Arabia and across the region.

The program empowers the next generation working behind the scenes through The Gems — immersive workshops (Short Film Gems, Industry Gems, Filmmaker Gems, and Film Critic Gems) — alongside Open Talks designed to inspire, connect, and spark new opportunities across the film industry.

Souk Talents Schedule

December 6, 2025 | Saturday

Time	Type of Event	Name	Language	Location	Access
11:30 – 12:30	Open Talk	Cinephilomania – From Inspiration to Action with Cherien Dabis	English*	Souk Forum 2	All Badges
13:00 – 14:00	Workshop	Film Critic Gems #1	English	Souk Sala 1	All Badges
13:00 – 14:00	Workshop	Short Film Gems :RAW CUT	English	Souk Sala 2	Registered Participants Only
14:30 – 15:30	Workshop	Industry Gems #1	English	Souk Sala 2	Registered Participants Only
15:45 – 16:45	Workshop	Industry Gems #2	English	Souk Sala 2	Registered Participants Only

December 7, 2025 | Sunday

Time	Type of Event	Name	Language	Location	Access
11:30 – 12:30	Open Talk	The Story of a Film – Live!	English*	Souk Forum 2	All Badges
13:00 – 14:00	Workshop	Film Critic Gems #2	English	Souk Sala 2	All Badges
13:00 – 14:00	Workshop	Short Film Gems: RAW CUT	English	Souk Sala 1	Registered Participants Only
15:45 – 16:45	Workshop	Industry Gems #3	English	Souk Sala 1	Registered Participants Only

December 8, 2025 | Monday

Time	Type of Event	Name	Language	Location	Access
11:30 – 12:30	Open Talk	From Script to Screen – Secrets behind a Great Story	English*	Souk Forum 2	All Badges
13:00 – 14:00	Workshop	Film Critic Gems #3	English	Souk Sala 2	All Badges
15:30 – 16:30	Workshop	Short Film Gems: RAW CUT	English	Souk Sala 1	Registered Participants Only

December 9, 2025 | Tuesday

Time	Type of Event	Name	Language	Location	Access
11:30 – 12:30	Open Talk	Short Film World – How to Make Your Short Shine	English*	Souk Forum 2	All Badges
13:00 – 14:00	Workshop	Film Critic Gems #4	English	Souk Sala 2	All Badges
13:00 – 14:00	Workshop	Short Film Gems :RAW CUT	English	Souk Sala 1	Registered Participants Only
14:00 – 15:00	Workshop	Industry Gems #4	English	Souk Sala 1	Registered Participants Only
15:00 – 16:00	Workshop	Industry Gems #5	English	Souk Sala 1	Registered Participants Only
16:00 – 16:30	Open Talk	Short Film Gems: The Pitch Buzz – Live Showcase	English*	Souk Forum 2	All Badges

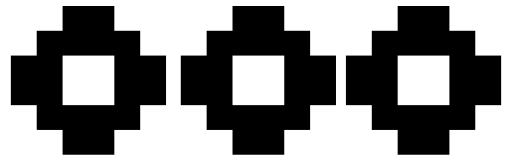
December 10, 2025 | Wednesday

Time	Type of Event	Name	Language	Location	Access
12:00 – 13:00	Open Talk	Short Film Gems Session	English	Souk Sala 1	All Badges
13:00 – 14:00	Workshop	Film Critic Gems #5	English	Souk Sala 2	All Badges
13:00 – 14:00	Workshop	Short Film Gems: RAW CUT	English	Souk Sala 1	Registered Participants Only
14:15 – 15:15	Workshop	Industry Gems #6	English	Souk Sala 1	Registered Participants Only

* with Arabic translation.

Souk Talents

Open talks



Cinephilomania

From Inspiration to Action

An inspiring conversation on how filmmakers turn vision into action — tracing the creative spark, the mentors who shaped their path, and the key decisions that transformed passion into a career.

With:

Cherien Dabis

Filmmaker

Palestinian–American writer, director and actress Cherien Dabis has established herself as a creative force across a variety of mediums. Having helped forge a new genre of Arab–American storytelling, she brings authenticity, complexity and humanity to the stories she writes, directs and performs, spotlighting underrepresented perspectives with humor and humanity. Most recently, Dabis served as the writer, director, producer and star of *All That's Left Of You*, which had its world premiere at Sundance Film Festival, winning numerous awards on the festival circuit.

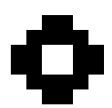


Moderator:

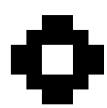


Lana Komsany

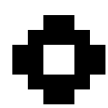
Multifaceted
Filmmaker



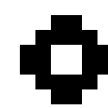
Format:
60 min
+ Q&A



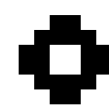
Language:
English with
Arabic translation



Date & Time:
Dec 6 at 11:30am



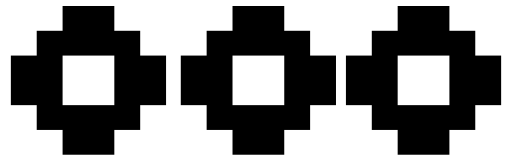
Venue:
Souk Room 2



Access:
All Badges

Souk Talents

Open talks



The Story of a Film – Live!

Join our new interactive event where you can learn all about the concept of the independent film journey!

Our panel of experts will represent every step of a hypothetical film journey from development and casting all the way through sales and release. And where will we get the project idea? From you, our creatively inspired audience.

Come join the fun and learn more about the story of a film.

With:



Rania Attieh
Filmmaker



Jessica Khoury
Producer – Film Clinic



Emad Eskander
Head of Red Sea Fund

Moderator:



Lara Abul Failat
Talent Agent
Founder of Nevername
Artists Agency



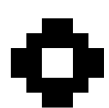
Gianluca Chakra
CEO, Front Row
Filmed Entertainment



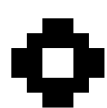
Sara Ghorra
Vice President Sales,
Legendary 193



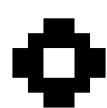
Wendy Mitchell
Journalist & Film
Festival Consultant



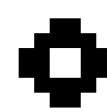
Format:
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+ Q&A



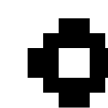
Language:
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translation



Date & Time:
Dec 7
at 11:30am



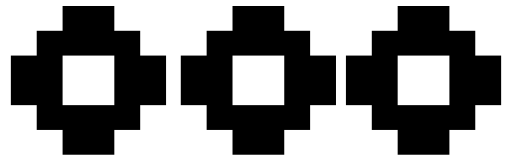
Venue:
Souk 2



Access:
All Badges

Souk Talents

Open talks



From Script to Screen

Secrets Behind a Great Story

A must-attend session on the creative journey from idea to finished film — exploring how producers collaborate with writers, shape stories, and nurture projects through every stage of development.

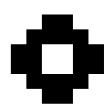
David Pope shares practical insights and real-world lessons on what makes strong development, how to build trust with talents, and how creative producers bring stories to life.

With:

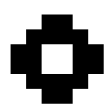
David Pope

Script Specialist

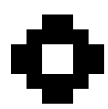
David Pope is a script consultant, screenwriter and development producer working globally. David has script consulted internationally for feature films and TV dramas including on multiple candidates for the Best International Film Academy Award such as "Obraz", "Tiger Stripes", "Take It or Leave It" and "Truth and Justice". In addition, among many industry activities, he is the annual advisor for the Rotterdam Lab at IFFRPro, program consultant to Stowe Story Labs, and script consults for multiple national film funds.



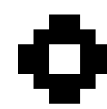
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+ Q&A



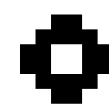
Language:
English with
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translation



Date & Time:
Dec 8
at 11:30am



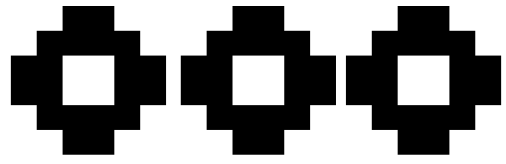
Venue:
Souk
Forum 2



Access:
All Badges

Souk Talents

Open talks



Short Film World

How to Make Your Short Shine

An essential talk for filmmakers aiming to make their short films stand out — exploring premiere strategies, festival positioning, and how to turn a short into a career springboard.

A lively discussion blending insider insights and practical advice on visibility, marketing, and long-term growth.

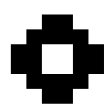
With:

Jennifer Chen

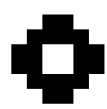
Head of Studios for Channel Zero

Jennifer Chen began her career in short films by identifying and promoting distinctive new voices. She managed international sales and festival strategy for shorts produced at the Canadian Film Centre. Subsequently, she became the General Manager of Ouat Media, responsible for acquisitions and global exploitation of a catalogue of audience-friendly, festival-winning and Oscar-nominated short film titles. From distribution, Jennifer transitioned to licensing, as the head of programming for Movieola- The Short Film Channel and other broadcast networks, curating short-form content, feature films and series for tv audiences.

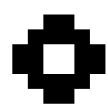
Jennifer is now Head of Studios for Channel Zero, Ouat Media's parent company, where she oversees the development and production of scripted drama series for domestic and international markets. She continues to steward Ouat Media, keeping abreast of new talent and platforms to exhibit premium content.



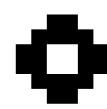
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+ Q&A



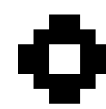
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Arabic
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Date & Time:
Dec 9 at
11:30am



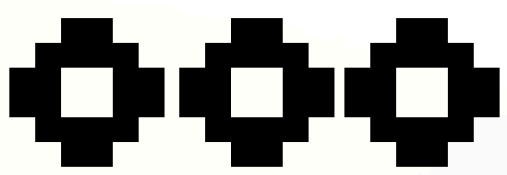
Venue:
Souk Forum 2



Access:
All Badges

Souk Talents

THE GEMS



A series of immersive workshops for **selected emerging film professionals**, designed to strengthen both **projects and careers**.

Each Gem offers a focused environment where participants receive **tailored mentorship, creative feedback**, and **insider guidance** from acclaimed industry professionals.

Souk Talents

Film Critic Gems

Reflection & Discourse

Film Critic Gems is a discussion-based workshop exploring the role and impact of film criticism in today's cinema landscape. Bringing together critics, filmmakers, programmers, journalists, and industry professionals, it fosters exchange, challenges perspectives, and deepens the understanding of how films engage with their audiences.

Format:
Intense collaborative discussion

With:



Ahmed Alayyad
Journalist
& Film Critic



Patrice Carre
Journalist
& Director



Tewfik Hakem
Journalist



Fionnuala Halligan
Director of
International
Programming RSIF



Alexis Hoffman
Producer



Yanis Koussim
Filmmaker



Christophe Leparc
Managing Director of
Directors' Fortnight -
Cannes, and Director
of Cinemed



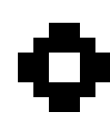
Andrew Mohsen
Head of
Programming at
El Gouna Film
Festival & Film Critic



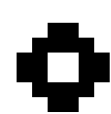
Myriam Sassine
Producer
& Aflamuna
Connection
Manager



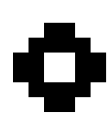
Ola Salwa
Film Critic,
Programmer



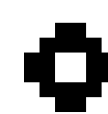
Language:
English



Date & Time:
From
December 6
til December
10 at 13:00



Venue:
Souk Sala 1 & 2



Access:
By registration
All Badges

Souk Talents

Short Film Gems

THE PITCH BUZZ

Short Film Script Development & Pitching

An intensive lab for emerging Saudi filmmakers to develop and refine their short film scripts while mastering the art of pitching.

Five selected participants benefit from individual guidance, creative mentorship, and direct exposure to international professionals and key festival networks.

Mentors:



Fatima Al Banawi
(Alf Wad)



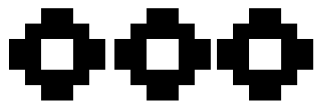
Rulan Hasan
(The Righters House)



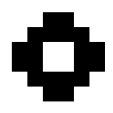
Fahad Samman
(The Righters House)



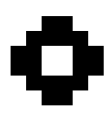
Hakim Mao
Film Consultant



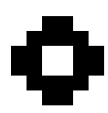
The 5 selected participants will benefit from a Script Development guidance made possible through our partners' support: **Alf Wad and The Righters House.**



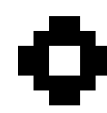
Language:
English



Date & Time:
December
9 at 16:00



Venue:
Souk Forum 2



Access:
All Badges

Selected Participants



Yasser Alsaadi
Roz Bukhari



Basil Alhumaidi
Lives on
the Asphalt



May Alsafi
Human
Malfunction



Omar Mugeem
The Rain Song



Hiba Raza
Banat Ninja

Souk Talents

Short Film Gems

Raw Cut

Work in Progress Short Films

Raw Cut is a post-production workshop supporting filmmakers in shaping the final edit of their short films.

Held during the Red Sea International Film Festival, the program offers a unique opportunity to receive creative and technical feedback from film industry experts on a rough cut.

Five selected projects will take part in an intensive program combining group discussions and one-on-one mentorship, helping participants refine their storytelling, strengthen their edit, and prepare their films for the festival circuit.

Mentors:



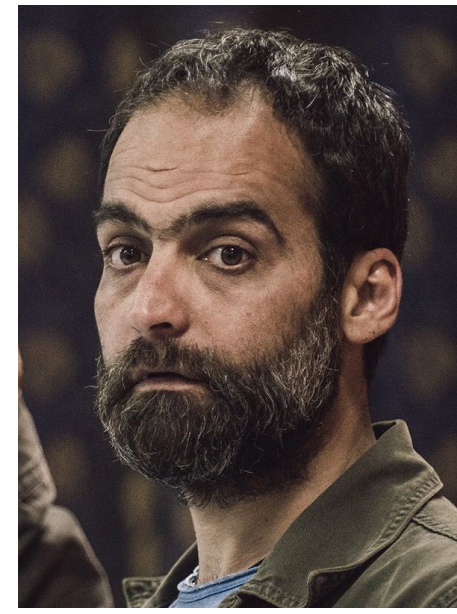
Bahareh Azimi
Screenwriter &
Film Consultant



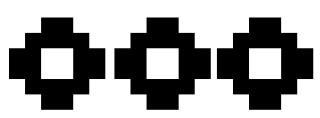
Chadi Abo
Filmmaker
& Producer VFX



Amine Bouhafa
Music Composer



Simon El Habre
Filmmaker & Editor



One selected participant will be granted a special award, made possible through our partners' support: **Clermont Ferrand International Short Film Festival.**

Selected Participants



Fahad Alamri
Project Title:
The Four Symphonies



Ismail Albukhari
Project Title:
Synthetic



Hala Alhindawi
Project Title:
The Journey Within – عبور



Adam Nedjim
Project Title:
Dr Bhjt



Malak Quota
Project Title:
Fragile

Souk Talents

Industry Gems

Industry Gems Mentorship & Career Development

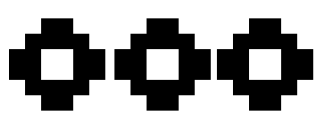
Industry Gems is a tailored mentorship program designed to empower future Saudi film professionals — including producers, programmers, aspiring distributors and sales agents — through direct exposure to the international film industry.

Held during the Red Sea International Film Festival, the program combines personalized mentorship, curated meetings, and on-site experiences within the Red Sea Souk, providing participants with valuable insights into market dynamics, festival operations, sales, and global industry practices.

Mentor:

David Kwok:

Film Industry Expert, Producer



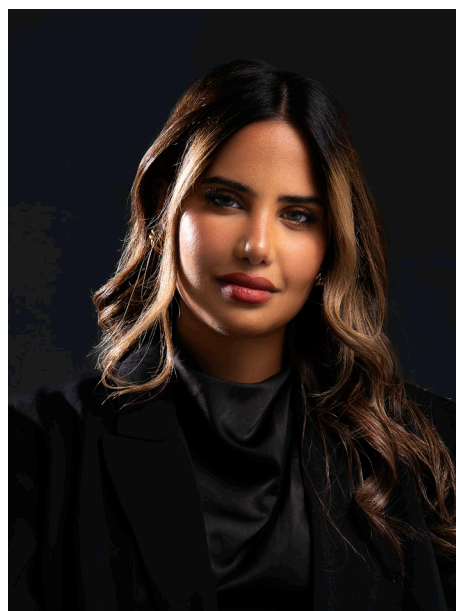
Two selected participants will be granted a special award, made possible through our partners' support.

Partners: **EFM Toolbox, Marché du Film – Cannes Makers.**

Selected Participants



Yousef Alhawari
Film Producer /
Creative Director



Rmas Alhazmi
Writer / Director
/ Development
Producer



Lama Jamjoom
Documentary Director &
Producer (Independent)
/ Cinema Public
Programmer (Art Jameel)



Fatima Louwim
Film Curator /
Cinema Programmer

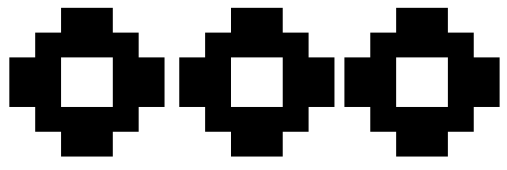


Tamim Mukhtar
Producer

Souk Talents

Filmmaker Gems

Filmmakers Spotlight



Filmmaker Gems is a personalised program supporting directors presenting short films in Competition (Red Sea Shorts Competition & New Saudi/New Cinema).

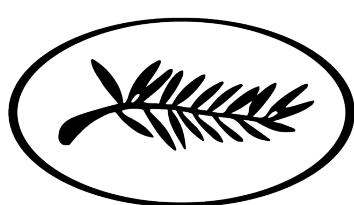
Through individual guidance, orientation sessions and dedicated encounters, the initiative helps participants navigate the Festival, expand their professional network, and strengthen their journey within the film industry.

Partners & Contacts

We want to express our gratitude to our supporters for their efforts.



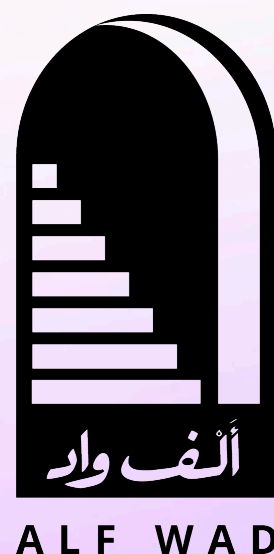
رايترز هاوس
Righters House



CANNES MAKERS
MARCHÉ DU FILM



Berlinale
EFM
European Film Market



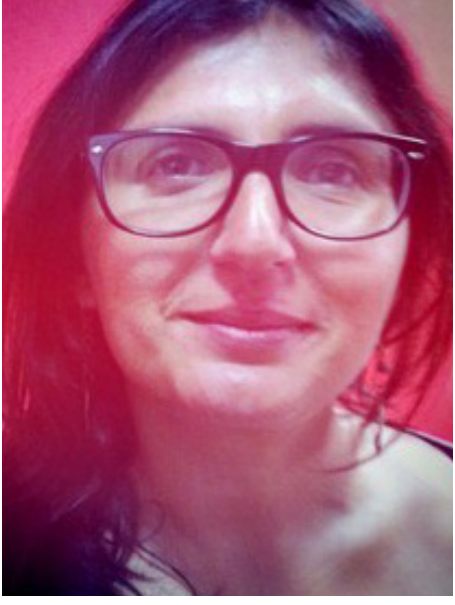
Contact:

✉ souktalents@redseafilmfest.com

🌐 www.redseafilmfest.com/souk-talents

📍 Red Sea International Film Festival, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

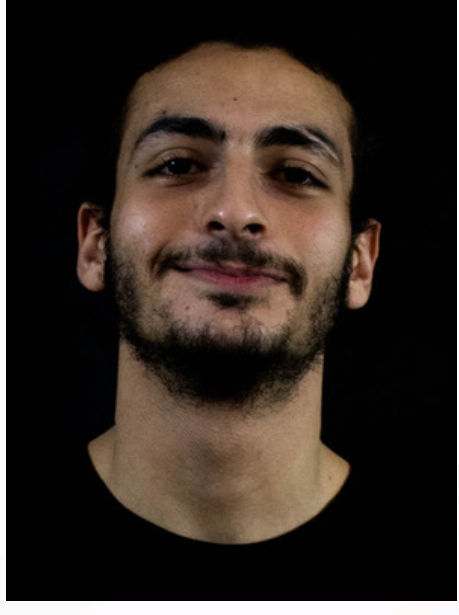
Souk Talents Team



Alice Kharoubi
Head of Red Sea
Souk Talents



Hakim Mao
Red Sea Souk
Talents Consultant



Yar Mekhtigian
Red Sea Souk
Talents Senior
Coordinator



Ahmed Hammad
Red Sea Souk
Talents Lead

We want to extend our sincere appreciation for your invaluable contributions to our event.

✦ To our Industry Guests:

Your expertise and involvement enriched Souk Talents, and we're thankful for your insights and interactions that added depth to our discussions.

✦ To our Speakers:

Your knowledge and passion left a lasting impact. Your dedication to our event's success was truly commendable, and we're grateful for your thought-provoking presentations.

✦ To our Attendees & Guests:

Your active participation and vibrant presence created a memorable atmosphere.

✦ To the Red Sea International Film Festival Team:

Your hard work and meticulous planning were the foundation of this event's success. Your commitment to excellence was evident in every detail.

We also want to express our gratitude to our partners for their support.

Thank you all for turning Souk Talents into the remarkable experience that it is.

We look forward to seeing you again next year!

RED SEA LABS

Red Sea Labs nurtures emerging voices and established filmmakers through a series of intensive programs designed to develop film and episodic projects from concept to screen. Spanning story development, directing, producing, music and sound, the Labs offer a creative space for experimentation, collaboration, and growth where creative visions are refined and cinematic stories are brought to life.

Operating year-round, the Labs support filmmakers at every stage of their journey, from early ideation and script development to final pitching and production readiness. The program fosters a vibrant ecosystem that connects talent with mentors, industry experts, and fellow creatives, cultivating a culture of innovation and artistic excellence.

Each cycle culminates during the Red Sea International Film Festival, where participants showcase their projects to global industry leaders, gaining exposure, recognition, and the opportunity to take their next steps in the filmmaking world.

III

330+ Artists | 100+ Female Artists | 59 Feature Films



340+ PROJECTS

A dynamic force in the world of Arab, African and Asian film financing, the Red Sea Fund operates across four cycles, encompassing projects in stages of development, production, and post-production. Documentary, fiction, animation, episodic, shorts, and features, the Fund is looking out for filmmakers and the new exciting wave of films.

340

Projects Supported

140

Co-productions

790+

Festival Selections

375+

Festival Awards

2

Oscar Nominations

17

Oscar Entries

CYCLE 01
POST-PRODUCTION FUND
Feb 6th — Feb 27th

CYCLE 01
PRODUCTION FUND
April 6th — April 21st

CYCLE 01
DEVELOPMENT FUND
June 6th — June 21st

CYCLE 01
POST-PRODUCTION FUND
August 6th — August 21st